



Healthy Start

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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BACKGROUND

The Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act was established through the enactment of former State Senator Robert Presley's Senate Bill 620 (Chapter 759, Statutes of 1996). Healthy Start was a key component of Governor Pete Wilson's 1991 initiatives for prevention and early intervention, created in response to recognition that the existing human services system is fragmented, inflexible and often inaccessible which hinders meeting children's needs.

Healthy Start connects schools in a partnership with public and private service providers, parents, and community organizations to better meet the needs of California's diverse student population. The program was created to reverse trends of increasing rates of poverty, child abuse, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile incarceration.

The Healthy Start program restructures current programs which support children and families by integrating services provided by parents, teachers, community members, and agencies such as county government, health and human services agencies and other public and private agencies. By focusing services within the community and at school sites, the program intends to meet the needs of children and families more effectively.

SERVICES

Healthy Start works in collaboration with local government, community agencies and parents, identifying community needs, strengths, and resources and utilizing the existing strengths and resources to address the identified needs. Services that may be offered include, but are not limited to:

Health care: including immunization, physical examinations and prenatal care;

Mental health services: including primary prevention and crisis intervention and treatment referrals;

Substance abuse prevention and treatment;

Family support and parenting education: including child abuse prevention and teen parenting programs; Provision of on-site eligibility workers for Medi-Cal, social services, probation, mental health and other services; and

Family basic needs: including employment development; legal services, food clothing, and housing.

Child care services may be provided through the Healthy Start program for school-age and younger children. Child care services, like other Healthy Start support services, depend on community needs. If child care services are not provided through the school site, Healthy Start programs may link families with a child care referral service.

HEALTHY START FACTS

1995-96 Funding	\$29 million
Total enrollment	347,708
Number of schools enrolled	469
Planning Grants	149
Operational Grants	100

Enrollment figures represent operational grants only.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The projects implemented across California by Healthy Start operational collaboratives represent four basic models: *School-site family resource centers* are the most common models which operate at school sites. *Family service coordination teams* feature service professionals who review the needs and status of at-risk students. *Youth service projects* focus their services on meeting the health, education and social needs of adolescents. *Satellite family service centers*, which are not located at an operating school, either identify family needs and refer to community resources or provide direct services.

Each Healthy Start program is designed to meet individual community needs. Services incorporate the culture and language of the community, and are family focused, allowing families to make decisions and obtain services which best suit their needs. Parents participate in designing and implementing their community's support services. Linking schools with the community makes services more accessible and increases the likelihood that families will utilize them. Healthy Start may also provide informal services such as neighborhood groups, recreational facilities and community organizations to help families connect to each other and their community. Early intervention and informal services may avert the need for intensive, formal services in the future.

LEGISLATIVE AND COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

FUNDING

Funding for Healthy Start grants comes entirely from the State of California general fund. In 1995-1996 Healthy Start received a base year allocation of \$19 million. The Governor recommended in his budget an additional \$20 million for program expansion, of which \$10 million was augmented into Healthy Start. This brings the total funding for the 1995-96 year to \$29 million.

As of May 1995, approximately 347,708 children and families are being served by Healthy Start.

HEALTHY START GRANTS

Local educational agencies (LEAs) apply for the highly competitive grants. Funding is targeted to applicants that have high populations of low-income or limited English proficient students.

Two types of grants are given under Healthy Start: Planning and Operational. *Planning grants* are awarded to eligible applicants who demonstrate a need for a structured planning period to develop strategies to effectively integrate existing community services. Planning grants do not exceed \$50,000 and are limited to a two-year planning phase.

Operational grants are awarded to applicants who demonstrate a readiness to implement their integrated Healthy Start initiatives. Operational grants can be up to \$300,000 for a three year period. Applicants can also apply for a one-time start-up fund of up to \$100,000. As of May 1995, there are 149 operational grantees and over 100 current planning grantees.

ELIGIBILITY

The Healthy Start program focuses funding to serve low-income schools and the families who attend those schools. To be eligible for a Healthy Start grant, elementary schools must have 50% or more students receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and/or speaking a primary language other than English. Schools are also eligible if half or more are eligible for free or reduced price meals. For grades 7-12, schools may qualify for Healthy Start grants if 35% or more of their student body receive (AFDC) program benefits, possess limited English skills, or are eligible for reduced-price meals

ADMINISTRATION

Senate Bill 620 designated the California Department of Education. Healthy Start Support Services for Children Council, as the administrator responsible for program implementation. In addition, the California Partnership for School-Linked Services provides policy oversight. The

California Partnership is composed of the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Health and Welfare agency and its affiliated state agencies. The California Partnership seeks to improve the state's educational, health, mental health and social service systems through policy recommendations and funding.

LONG RANGE GOALS

Healthy Start supports collaborative efforts of LEAs with other local service programs. Future goals for the program include restructuring California's service system so that it can become more comprehensive, integrated, preventive and locally based in district schools. Healthy Start also hopes to design a stable funding source for Healthy Start and other integrated services.

In the long run, collaborators hope to see support services that are accessible and foster a child's social, physical, and educational growth.

EARLY RESULTS

After six months of operation, the Healthy Start statewide evaluation found that the program helps meet basic needs such as food, clothing, transportation, and child care. It also found that almost 75% of the Healthy Start program staff reported that they were better able to meet the needs of students and families upon receiving Healthy Start grants.

SOURCES

Healthy Start Support Services for Children's Program Council,
California Department of Education

Healthy Start pamphlet and CAPSS booklet 1994, California
Partnership for Comprehensive, Integrated School-linked
Services

California's Healthy Start Legislative Brief, 1995, California
Department of Education

Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act 1992-1995,
California Department of Education

SB 620/Healthy Start Grant Application Materials 1994,
California Department of Education

On The Capitol Doorstep July/August 1995 Volume 25, Number 7

SB 620- Healthy Start Initiative Comprehensive, Integrated
School- Linked Services California Department of Education

SB 1170 Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grant Program, Lockyer,
Chaptered 311, Statutes of 1995.

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